

# VICTIM ADVOCATE

**GRADE: 16**

**FLSA: NON-EXEMPT**

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF CLASS:**

The Victim Advocate performs intermediate paraprofessional work in a non-sworn position that provides proactive and timely support, information, counseling and appropriate referrals to crime victims and witnesses, making them aware of the range and availability of services and facilitating their access to those services. While the physical requirements of the position are limited to light in nature, it does require considerable mental effort to resolve relative issues. The work is subject to general policy direction, practices and procedures with general supervisory review, and the daily actions have meaningful impact on specific cases.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF ALL CITY EMPLOYEES:**

- Learn and demonstrate an understanding of City, department, division and team goals.
- Serve and meet the needs of customers during routine or emergency situations.
- Ability and willingness to work as part of a team, to demonstrate team skills and to perform a fair share of team responsibilities.
- Ability to assess his/her work performance or the work performance of the team.
- Plan and organize his/her work, time and resources, and if applicable that of subordinates.
- Contribute to the development of others and/or the working unit or overall organization.
- Produce desired work outcomes including quality, quantity and timeliness.
- Communicate effectively with peers, supervisors, subordinates and people to whom service is provided.
- Understand and value differences in employees and value input from others.
- Consistently report to work and work assignments prepared and on schedule.
- Consistently display a positive behavior with regard to work, willingly accept constructive criticism and be respectful of others.

## **EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:**

- Contacts victims of all crime classifications via telephone or letter to ascertain needs, advises victims of their rights, provides support during the preliminary phase of the investigation, and during the investigation's follow-up phase (i.e. counseling, information regarding financial compensation, creditor intercession, or court accompaniment).
- Meets as necessary with victims at the station to explain police/criminal justice procedures, assists with the completion of forms and charging documents,

provides crime prevention information and training, and/or arranges for translation and interpretation services.

- Works closely with officers and others within the department to identify problems or crime trends or patterns in the City and assists with development of appropriate, responsive strategies, which may include environmental clean-up, diversion activities, crime prevention training, coordination of Neighborhood Watch, and cross-cultural education.
- Works closely with other agencies to foster teamwork, cooperation, and coordination between this department and other agencies.
- Works closely with the department's Community Services Officer on matters of mutual interest.
- Maintains a reference of services and opportunities available to victims of crime. Formally surveys victims to identify unmet needs and gauges the impact of police follow-up.
- Reviews computer-generated print-outs of calls for service to identify recidivism in the classification of domestic disputes and domestic violence calls; contacts victims who repeatedly call police to identify the nature of the problem (e.g. mate-related, elder, child, substance abuse); educates the victims about the impact of their repeated calls without intervention and resolution, and mobilizes the resources to address the problems.
- Writes reports, based on information learned from victims, to formally update or close cases.
- Interviews victims at home, when necessary, after receiving a report or request from an officer.
- Accompanies victims to court proceedings for support and to assist with obtaining charging documents or Ex-Parte Orders.
- When necessary, assists other department personnel with appropriate office duties, or with other problems for which the Victim Advocate is qualified to offer assistance.
- Coordinates department victim assistance matters and programs with the department's Community Services Officer.
- Assists the department's Accreditation Manager to ensure compliance with law enforcement accreditation standards relating to victim and witness assistance.
- Keeps the Chief of Police and Command Staff members informed and apprised of victims' concerns and of activities and efforts undertaken by the Victim Advocate through the preparation and completion of a monthly activity report.
- Performs other appropriate duties as required

### **QUALIFICATION:**

### **Required Training and Experience:**

Any combination of training and experience substantially equivalent to graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in human services, counseling, or a closely related field and two years of experience in a counseling

services position. Possession of an appropriate driver's license valid in the State of Maryland.

**Preferred Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

- Knowledge of the appropriate community-based and government-based resources to which victims can be referred.
- Knowledge of general police and criminal justice procedures in order to adequately explain same to victims and witnesses, and specific knowledge of department policies and procedures regarding the delivery of services to crime victims and witnesses.
- Knowledge of victims' rights and of appropriate advocacy skills.
- Knowledge of Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) standards pertaining to victim and witness assistance.
- Skill in dealing with a variety of persons, under stressful and non-stressful conditions.
- Ability to analyze situations in order to find effective solutions to problems.
- Ability to interact with community members and leaders, members of the media, and elected and non-elected government and non-government officials in both formal and informal settings; and
- Ability to make informative, educational presentations to different age groups on topics of concern to the victims and the department.
- Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.